

Tech Talk : Windows 7 is available; do you have a plan?

By **MJ Shoer**

October 29, 2009 2:00 AM

Oct. 22 was the official day Windows 7 became generally available in the computer market. It has actually been available for more than a month to business customers that utilize a license agreement for their company computers.

I continue to believe this will be a very successful operating system for Microsoft, just as Windows XP has been. It's certainly no secret Windows Vista was a bust. As one Microsoft employee said to me, the company has decided to throw Windows Vista under the bus and focus on ensuring Windows 7 is a success.

All indicators are that this is exactly what is taking place. Windows 7 is being heralded as an excellent operating system, one that does improve users' productivity and one that deals with legacy compatibility issues much more gracefully than its predecessor. Windows 7 also introduces several features that are having real benefit for users.

If you think Windows 7 will be a good upgrade for your organization, you should act sooner rather than later, as Microsoft is offering some excellent incentives. Why not take advantage of special pricing while it is available?

One feature of Windows 7 that users of portable computers will absolutely love is Location Aware Printing. Location Aware Printing addresses the issue of the computer knowing which printer to print to, based on what network you are connected to. Simply stated, have you ever had the issue where you are at the office and printing goes to the network printer that you are used to, but then you go home and you click print and nothing comes out from your home printer? Instead of the computer knowing that you are now at home and that your office printer is no longer available, it tried to send the print job to the network printer. This results in the print job sitting in the office printer queue and not printing on your home computer. You need to manually select your home printer to print at home.

What's more, when you get back to the office the next day, what you tried to print at home comes out on the office printer. That may be a very bad thing, depending on what you were printing.

Location Aware Printing solves this, but knowing what network you are connected to and which printer should be your default printer for that network is necessary.

Therefore, when at the office, your print jobs print on the office network printer. When at home, you print to your home printer. It's really just that simple.

Jump Lists are another huge time saver with Windows 7. When working with a multitude of files across several different applications, it's often a daunting task to remember where each file is located out on the corporate network. Jump Lists is one of several ways to address this.

You may be familiar with a feature of most software application that provides a list of recently opened files when you are within the given application. This works well if you spend most of your time in one program. Jump Lists apply even to the icon for the individual application.

In other words, if you right click on the Microsoft Word icon, you will see a list of the recently opened files that you have worked with so you can return to that file with a single click. This will save time and allow for a more efficient workflow for users.

The last feature I will touch on for now is the built-in backup utility included in Windows 7.

This feature will allow you to take a scheduled snapshot of every computer on the network, to allow for rapid recovery of a computer that may develop problems that would otherwise take large amounts of time to resolve. All that's required is sufficient storage on the network to save these backups. This will be a real benefit for anyone that finds themselves battling spyware on a computer.

All in all, Windows 7 is an upgrade that should pay for itself very quickly for most computer users. Thanks for reading.

MJ Shoer is president and virtual chief technology officer of Jenaly Technology Group, a Portsmouth-based outsourced IT services provider. E-mail him at mshoer@jenaly.com.